

Acambis

# Leading Biotechnology Company Deploys Innovative Information-Sharing Solution and Increases Productivity of Employees by 100 Per Cent

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## Solution Overview

### Company

Acambis

### Customer Profile

Employing over 300 people, Acambis plc is a biotechnology company specialising in the development of vaccines to prevent and treat infectious diseases. With a head office in the UK, it has research and manufacturing operations across nine locations in both the UK and US.

### Business Situation

Acambis was running a mixture of systems across a range of applications. This made it difficult to locate, utilise, and share thousands of documents held at various locations. It also hindered the efficient use of company resources in the management of research projects.

### Solution Description

Acambis deployed Microsoft® Office SharePoint® Portal Server 2003 and used the company Intranet to integrate a variety of company-wide applications.

### Benefits

- Productivity in the marketing department increased by 100 per cent
- Integration of processes through a single point of reference
- Management and staff can access the entire corporate knowledge store
- Meets strict regulatory requirements
- Ease of management
- Speed of development
- Reduced administration costs
- Faster time to market

### Partner(s)

Anglia Business Computers

### Software and Services

[Microsoft Exchange Server 2003](#)

[Microsoft Office Professional Edition 2003](#)

[Microsoft Office Project Server 2003](#)

[Microsoft Office SharePoint Portal Server 2003](#)

[Microsoft SQL Server 7.0](#)

[Microsoft Windows Server 2003 Standard Edition](#)

### Hardware

- HP-rack mounted, load-balanced and clustered servers
- Citrix Metaframe XPA

### Vertical Industries

Pharmaceuticals

### Country/Region

United Kingdom

### Solutions

Portals

***Acambis is a leading biotechnology company, that develops vaccines for a range of infectious diseases. With nine research and manufacturing offices across the US and the UK, the company needed to ensure that all of its employees could work efficiently across the entire network. Acambis needed to implement a solution that would consolidate the sources of data across the organisation. To achieve these goals, the company has implemented Microsoft Office SharePoint Portal Server 2003 with the help of Microsoft Gold Certified Anglia Business Computers. The new solution enables the company to better share information, meet regulatory needs on the traceability of information, speed up processes, and achieve faster time to market. As a result of the implementation, the company's marketing department has also doubled its overall productivity.***

## **Situation**

Acambis needed to cope with rapid growth while meeting demanding regulatory standards in the biotechnology industry. Groups of people in the US and the UK work collaboratively on thousands of documents required for submission to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The company needed to reduce the amount of unproductive administrative work and costs caused by the duplication of documents across the enterprise. Typically, documents run to many hundreds of pages and contain detailed graphics, tables, and embedded scientific data.

Traditional methods of managing this vast collection of documents required that files were updated with documents e-mailed between group members. This led to islands of data and was becoming impractical due to the increasing volume of traffic as the company expanded. In this scenario, it was not uncommon for the company to experience server network issues due to overloading of the e-mail service.

Acambis set out to develop a system that embraced all of the processes in place within the organisation, while controlling costs. Ian McKendrick, IS Director, Acambis, says: "We didn't want a piecemeal solution. Integration was vital to ensure that the management team had a clear view of relevant trends across the business. We didn't want to get back to the islands of data syndrome."

It was established that the required solution would have to:

- Consolidate the various sources of information across the enterprise.
- Reduce administration by improving the productivity of document production processes.
- Give authorised employees secure, efficient access to up-to-date information.
- Meet rigid regulatory requirements for tracing information.
- Reduce operational costs by maximising the value of current IT resources and demonstrating savings over existing business practices.

## **Solution**

Acambis looked at a number of options prior to selecting Microsoft® Office SharePoint® Portal Server 2003. McKendrick says: "We already had significant investment in Microsoft infrastructure and have achieved some notable successes by integrating our trans-continental networking platform. It therefore made sense to see what else the company could offer us.

"Working with our IT Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, Anglia Business Computers, we were able to explore the new version of SharePoint Portal Server 2003. Anglia provided access to technical experts with in-depth product expertise during the evaluation process. The system pulled together all of the disparate systems throughout the organisation into a centrally managed platform. This provided immediate access and a single point of reference for management and staff to the entire corporate knowledge store wherever they were located. It is also totally compatible with our existing platform. Furthermore, it was far more cost effective than the alternative options."

Anglia Business Computers worked in collaboration with the IT team at Acambis to deploy SharePoint Portal Server as the company Intranet. The approach was to work with a group of key users in setting up a test system where the concepts were extensively tested prior to live system deployment.

Irrespective of where documents are stored across the organisation, they can be accessed quickly and easily via SharePoint Portal Server, which creates a centralised directory with search and indexing features. The technology also handles documents in any format, including scanned images and PDF files, and provides versioning control to track changes made to documents through a project lifecycle.

Delivery of files is enabled by VPN technology. Citrix servers are used to enable a thin client computing architecture and manage bandwidth effectively on the corporate network.

The system is fully integrated with other applications in use throughout the organisation. These include Microsoft Office Project Server 2003, which is used to assist in the monitoring of scientific research projects. Project Server 2003 countdown timers were incorporated to assist in this process. As SharePoint Portal Server is seamlessly linked to Microsoft Outlook® messaging and collaboration client now, any changes made using Project Server are automatically updated in users' calendars and tasks.

The IT helpdesk system was easily integrated, making it possible for users to simply log and process requests for assistance. A room booking management system was incorporated that enables users to see when facilities are available and to book resources when needed. The incorporation of the company phone book consolidated all telephone numbers on one Web site. This makes it easy to locate and contact internal and external colleagues as well as business associates.

The entire system was delivered using Web services, making it easy for authorised personnel to access and update the system from any location and at any time.

## **Benefits Enhanced Productivity**

The implementation of SharePoint Portal Server has resulted in improved integration and collaboration throughout the company. Acambis has also eliminated the errors and time-consuming activities associated with its previous paper-based processes.

McKendrick says: "It is still early days in the rollout process but we have already seen some massive productivity gains throughout the company. We now have immediate access and a single point of reference to the entire corporate knowledge store. The complexity of managing multiple storage areas has also been removed. As a result, we have full integration of many of our diverse applications across the enterprise. It also provides us with the perfect development platform for future integration projects."

The most dramatic productivity gains have been felt in the marketing department. McKendrick says: "We measured the amount of time it took to carry out various tasks within the marketing department prior to the deployment of the SharePoint Portal Server solution. The project enables our people to increase their productivity by 100 per cent by reducing the time required for some tasks by half. This doubling of productivity is a notable win and has more than justified the investment to date. SharePoint Portal Server has therefore already met all of the deliverables set out for the project. Furthermore, what is remarkable is that the vast majority of our requirements were met by the 'out of the box' features of the system."

## **Ease of Management**

The implementation of the new solution has significantly improved business-critical processes across the company. With enhanced collaboration and management capabilities, Acambis has already made significant time and cost savings and dramatically reduced its time to market.

McKendrick says: "Our users were already familiar with Microsoft technology so the learning curve was minimal. They now find it easy to collaborate on the production of large documents with the benefit of full version control and audit trails. Once set up, management of the system required no further IT intervention and each site owner has total control of the administration of their part of the solution. This, coupled with rapid download times, has significantly reduced administration costs and improved efficiency.

"We have also experienced improvements in the management of complex projects. With combined functionality from Microsoft Project and the calendars and task lists within Microsoft Outlook, we can view progress against all projects enabling us to optimise resource usage within the company. This will reduce our time to market which is a very important consideration in our business."

## The Future

The ease of rollout of the SharePoint Portal Server solution with minimal user disruption has encouraged Acambis to extend the system to other parts of the organisation. The company plans to create a unified domain using Active Directory®, part of Windows Server 2003. The manufacturing enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution will soon be incorporated within SharePoint Portal Server using the Microsoft .NET Framework an integral component of Windows® operating system that provides a programming model and runtime for Web services, Web applications, and smart client applications. Existing legacy database interfaces will be replaced using Microsoft InfoPath™ information-gathering program and the thin client delivery of Microsoft Office 2003 is already under way. McKendrick says: "My view on IT investments has always been that they have to be targeted on the key business drivers within an organisation. In the highly competitive biotechnology industry, leveraging the skills of every member of the company to reduce our time to market is the key to our success. Any time I can save for our employees through effective IT solutions greatly assists this process and helps the company to prosper.

"The SharePoint Portal Server project has already shown us the benefits of being able to integrate all of our processes through a single point of reference. It was professionally planned and delivered using a combination of in-house resources and the skills of our IT partner Anglia Business Computers. Their Gold Certified Partner status was crucial in providing us with in-depth knowledge of SharePoint Portal Server and Microsoft .NET technologies.

"We also very much appreciated the role played by Microsoft during the early stages of the project. The SharePoint Portal Server system is now mission critical to the business and to revert to our previous method of operating is unthinkable. This total Microsoft solution will provide us with a significant future competitive advantage in our industry."

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